VII.

Omens.

Probably on account of the frequent attacks on Gilgit made by the chiefs of the surrounding States, certain signs and occurrences are considered to be omens among the Gilgitis. They are as follows:— 787 324

(1) If an unusually heavy rain falls at any season in Gilgit, it is supposed that the chief of Yasin will advance towards Gilgit.

(2) If innumerable kites are seen hovering over Gilgit, it is generally accepted that Gilgit is to be invaded by the Nagar people.

(3) If packs of wolves make frequent night visits into Gilgit, and inflict heavy losses among the flocks, it is affirmed that the chief of Hunza is certainly going to invade and plunder Gilgit.

(4) If the harvest be unusually abundant, it is believed that Gilgit will be attacked by the Punyal Chiefs.

VIII.

Lunar Eclipse.

The Gilgitis say that Gwahr is the name of a giant, who is a lover of the moon. On the 14th of the lunar months, when the moon is in its full beauty, the Gwahr, whenever he pleases, catches hold of the moon, leaving untouched only a part which contains a fig tree. As such time the people of those parts beat their iron pans (on which they cook bread) like drums and cry loudly, "O Gwahr, we have brought a large force, bearing drums against thee, leave her (the moon), or we will rush upon thee!" In the meantime the eclipse ends, and they become happy at their success. 321 776

Solar Eclipse.

The Gilgit people say that whenever any good king dies or is banished from his country, the great Gwahr becomes angry against the sun, and darkens a whole or a part of his (the sun's) face as a sign of grief for the death or the banishment of such a good king.

IX.

The Creation of the World. 773

It is said that the earth was at first enveloped in water, which was of some places frozen, and above some Yachs (giants) had taken their abode under Yachi Hal Singh, their ruler. On a certain day they held a council for the purpose of bringing earth over the water. Their ruler said that the task was above their power but, however, in favor of a saying of his ghost-guide, who had [illegible] named Wazeerh, (old man) and who, sent as a messenger by the Yachs, but the wolf refused to come, saying that he would not

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The ordinary Mahommedan calendar is, however, coming into use, especially among the Ashimadek class. The days of the week are named according to the Mahommedan calendar, except that Friday is named Adinna.

In Bushkar and Torwal, the Mahommedan calendar is followed. In the latter place the ordinary names are preserved, in the former the months are named—

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| Hassan Hossein. | Soorji (*Great month*). |
| Safer. | Shukubber. |
| Perum ishpo (*First sister*). | Rua. |
| Dowim ishpo (*Second sister*). | Lokyil (*Small festival*). |
| Thoi ishpo (*Third sister*). | Milina (*Intervening*). |
| Chor ishpo (*Fourth sister*). | Ghoyil (*Great festival*). |

The constellation of the Great Bear is called "the maiden's corpse," the four corner stars being supposed to represent a bier: the small star above the middle star of the tail is called the "star of life," as it is supposed to be invisible to a person forty days before death. The pleiades are called the flock of sheep; a comet, "the star with a tail," is supposed to portend the death of a king. The milky way is called the "track of the cow and horse," the tradition being that in the broad part about the middle the horse fell down from going too fast, while the cow travelled safely. The world is supposed to rest on the horns of a cow, which shakes its head occasionally at the sins of the inhabitants, and so causes earthquakes.

The west and south are always spoken of as up, and the north and east as down. A man going west or south to a place talks of going up to it. Fairies and demons that live in caves among the mountains or in desert places, have a prominent place in the belief of the Dards. Dr. Leitner has already given an account of the Yetch and its female counterpart the Rood. In Bootiahki they are known as Phoot casting its shadow over a person, while the shadow of a fairy confers the gift of prophecy. Demons assume the appearance of human beings to lure men to destruction, but they are recognisable by their feet being turned backwards.

In Gilgit, Hunza, and Nagar the ruler's family is supposed to be specially under the protection of a guardian fairy called Yoodeni. A drum, called the Yoodeni drum, is always kept on the top of the ruler's castle. When it is heard to sound at certain festivals and at critical times it presages good fortune. Nobody must try to see the Yoodeni, or look in that direction

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when the drum is heard; if he did so, some evil would be certain to happen to the daring individual, the least he could expect would be that his head would be twisted round to his back, and remain so for the rest of his life. A warlike expedition undertaken without the sounding of the Yoodeni drum would certainly end in disaster.

Trial by appeal to the ordeal of fire is still practised. Seven paces are measured, and a red-hot axe-head is placed on the open palm of the accused, on which a green leaf has first been spread. He must then deposit the hot iron at the spot appointed seven paces distant, and should any mark of a burn remain on his hand, it is a proof of guilt. The Vakeel of the Thum of Hunza on one occasion offered to subject himself to the ordeal before me, in order to clear his master of a false accusation.

Magic has a prominent place in Dard ideas, and many individuals are credited with the power of exercising magical arts. The rulers of Hunza and Nager are credited by their subjects with the power of producing rain. During a very severe winter I captured a full-grown markhor, which had wandered during the night into the cultivated land. The occurrence being unusual, the animal was at once regarded as a *jin*, and a deputation came to me shortly after it was captured, asking me to release it lest it should bring misfortune on the place. The death of the Wuzeer, which happened unexpectedly a few days afterwards, is still ascribed to the occurrence. Written charms are in great request, and every person wears one or more suspended to different parts of the dress by circular brass buckles. Those most in demand are charms conferring invulnerability and courage on the wearer. Charms are also attached to the maps and to [illegible] of causing tempests if anything impure, such as a cowskin, is placed in them. This seems to have been an old and widely-spread superstition. Baber mentions it in his memoirs. "Some books mention that in Ghazni there is a fountain, into which if any filth or ordure be thrown, immediately there rises a tempest and hurricane with snow and rain."[1] The same is mentioned by another writer.[2] "Many days elapsed without the opponents having engaged each other, when it was mentioned to Mahmood that in the camp of Jeipal was a spring into which if a mixture of ordure should be thrown, the sky would immediately become overcast, and a dreadful

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storm of hail and wind arise. Mahmood having caused this to be done, the effects became visible; for, instantly the sky lowered, and thunder, lightning, wind, and hail succeeded, turning the day into night, and spreading horror and destruction around."

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Divination is still practised, in spite of the conversion of the country to Mahommedanism. The Dainyals, or diviners, who are of both sexes but are more frequently women, are supposed to receive the gift of second sight by the shadow of a Barai, or fairy, having fallen on them in sleep. Dr. Leitner

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speaks of the gift as being supposed to be hereditary, but this is not the case, though the daughters of Dainyals often become Dainyals also. Dainyals are said to be only found among the shepherd population, and it is easy to understand how a solitary life among the wild crags of the Hindoo Koosh should encourage a belief in the power of intercourse with the unseen world. Quite young people become Dainyals, and the spirit of prophecy is supposed to remain with them for life.

The first intimation of the gift to the friends of the recipient is conveyed by their finding him or her in a deep trance. The requisite music is brought, flageolets being substituted for the ordinary clarionets, and softly modulated airs are played close to the ear of the entranced. Gradually he moves and begins to show signs of life, on which a goat is brought and decapitated, and the bleeding neck presented to the Dainyal novice. This is the test of a true Dainyal. If the gift of divination has really come to him, he seizes the bleeding neck, and sucks the blood. Some find this too much for them, and refusing to suck the blood are looked on afterwards as only feebly gifted with the spirit of prophecy. The idea of imposture never seems to be entertained by these simple-minded people. The recognised Dainyals are consulted on all special occasions, such as the yearly festivals in summer, or the declaration of war with a neighbouring state. The spirit of divination is supposed to lie dormant in winter, and to be strong in proportion to the heat of the weather.

On the first occasion of my witnessing an incantation, two Dainyals were brought from a considerable distance to prophesy at the Ganoni festival in June. They were both women, one of about twenty-five and the other about forty years of age, who showed by their wild and haggard looks the strain of the often-practised ceremony on their faculties. A circle